R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 016 554 RC 002 240

UNDERSTANDING--SANTO DOMINGO'S RX FOR THE "CULTURAL SHOCK."

BY- LOPEZ, REBECCA

PUB DATE APR 67

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.24 4P.

DESCRIPTORS- *AMERICAN INDIANS, ANTHROPOLOGY, *CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED, CULTURE, CULTURAL DIFFERENCES, CURRICULUM, *ENGLISH (SECOND LANGUAGE), HISTORY, INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS, LANGUAGE ARTS, VALUES, LITERATURE, NEEDS, *TEACHER ORIENTATION,

THE SANTO DOMINGO, NEW MEXICO, PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ENROLLS 720 INDIAN PUPILS IN GRADES 1 THROUGH 8 AND UTILIZES 30 TEACHERS IN ITS INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM. ALTHOUGH THE PUPILS COME FROM A CULTURE WHICH IS UNFAMILIAR TO MOST OF THEIR TEACHERS, A PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF THE SCHOOL IS THAT THE LIFE, CUSTOMS, BELIEFS, AND CULTURE OF THE INDIAN CHILDREN WILL BE MAINTAINED AND REINFORCED THROUGH THEIR EDUCATION, AND THAT CULTURAL AND LOCAL NEEDS OF THE PUPIL WILL BE MET BY THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM. IN ORDER TO FULFILL THIS OBJECTIVE, A TEACHER ORIENTATION PROGRAM, ORGANIZED ON A CONTINUING BASIC HAS BEEN INITIATED AT SANTO DOMINGO. THIS PROGRAM WAS DEVELOPED THROUGH AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH, DRAWING HEAVILY UPON THE WORKS OF OUTSTANDING ANTHROPOLOGISTS, HISTORIANS, EDUCATORS, SOCIOLOGISTS, AND LINGUISTIC AUTHORITIES. IN ANOTHER STEP TO MEET THE PREVIOUSLY CITED OBJECTIVE, THE CURRICULUM HAS BEEN DEVELOPED AROUND THE COMMUNICATIVE ARTS, ESPECIALLY THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE. EMPHASIS IS ALSO PLACE ON SUCH SUBJECTS AS ANTHROPOLOGY, LITERATURE, AND HISTORY OF CULTURALLY-DIFFERENT PEOPLE. THIS ARTICLE APPEARS IN THE "NEW MEXICO SCHOOL REVIEW," APRIL 1967, PP. 12-14, 40. (ES)

ED016554

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

"Naturally, there are little handicaps which the child brings to school with him," said Principal A. A. Martinez. "His very background dictates that we spend time to familiarize teachers with his problems. The teacher is in a challenging position because his judgment will prevail in the classroom."

UNDERSTANDING . . .

Santo Domingo's Rx for the "Cultural Shock"

By REBECCA LOPEZ,

REVIEW Staff Writer

We get six months experience in one week," commented Joseph Roybal, third grade and primary music teacher at the Santo Domingo Public School.

He was describing the four-year-old formal orientation program which is an attempt to prepare teachers for the so-called "cultural shock" which they are certain to encounter in classrooms there. It is certain because of the 730 pupils enrolled in kindergarten through grade 8 at the school, 720 have been reared in a culture unfamiliar to most of the 30 staff members who will work with these Indian children.

"Our educational system has prepared the teacher to teach children of middle-class values and orientation," writes Louis Buenabenta, school counselor and director of the program. "It has failed to prepare teachers and counselors, in general, to work with the culturally-different and culturally-deprived student."

Actually, an informal orientation has been in operation at the school since the lease for construction was signed in 1956 by the Bernalillo Municipal Schools system (to which the Santo Domingo school belongs) and the three Indian pueblos of Santo Domingo, San Felipe and Cochiti.

The lease provided that the "life, customs, beliefs and culture," of the Indian children would be maintained and reinforced through their education, and that cultural and local needs of the pupil and the pueblo would be met by the educational program at the new public school. A cultural orientation for all staff members was deemed a beginning toward fulfilling this request.

But it was not until after Buenabenta completed an extensive research project on culturally-different groups that the formal program took form. Buenabenta's written observations serve as the "basic text" for teachers undergoing orientation. In putting down his findings, Buenabenta has drawn from the works of outstanding anthropologists, historians, educators, sociologists and linguistics authorities.

"The need for an orientation pro-

ABOVE:
"Understanding is so different—it's a small thing for me but for them it's something large . . . it's a bottoms-up situation—they'll become bored, lose interest readily, but once they're with you, they learn real fast and are more accurate." Miss Yvonne Vigil is in her first year of teaching, young and eager and, like the others, enjoys teaching the Indian children.

RIGHT:
Joseph Roybal teaches music. He is impressed by the rhythmic spirit and sense of humor the kids have. His pupils taught him how to say in Indian "it's for the birds," "you cut me down pretty fast," "you walk like a bunch of goats." —They call him "medicine man."

RIGHT:
"Culture-free" characters are used in the reading program which is taught at the beginning levels at Santo Domingo.

BELOW:
The homogenuity of the enrollment at the Santo Domingo Public School is evident in the group below—although Indian students far outnumber those of Spanish-American and Anglo descent. The emphasis on a cultural approach to the curriculum is pointed out by the "minority" as the children gathered in front of a hallway bulletin board.

gram is brought about simply because educators are failing to realize that a problem exists and that they have to modify the curriculum in order to better educate these youths," writes Buenabenta.

The program is a continuous and an inclusive one. A new teacher is introduced into the culturally-different world through books, filmstrips, conferences and informal discussions with faculty members who already have been in contact with Indian children in and outside the classroom. Then, throughout their stay, teachers enroll in university extension courses in the fields of anthropology, cultures, etc., and the education of children with these backgrounds. Study groups' enable teachers to keep abreast of developments in the field and to relate personal experiences from their own work with their pupils.

Students Participate

But orientation at Santo Domingo is a two-party affair. For the student's part, there are assemblies with guest speakers representing cultures similar and different from their own and a variety of dramatic and musical presentations by groups from other backgrounds. Homeroom activities include study and discussion groups as a supplement to regular studies with a cultural approach. And school curriculum puts a marked importance on subjects such as anthropology, history and literature of culturally-different people, and teaching English as a second language with an emphasis on conversation—which has to be the realistic answer to working with the culturally-different. All concerned agree on this.

"We are keenly aware of the problems that confront the culturally-different child," stated A. A. Martinez, principal at the Santo Domingo school. "But we believe that each pupil can function effectively within the pueblo community, at school and in an environment outside of his own. To help him along the way, the school curriculum must be centered around the communicative arts, especially the teaching of English as a second language."

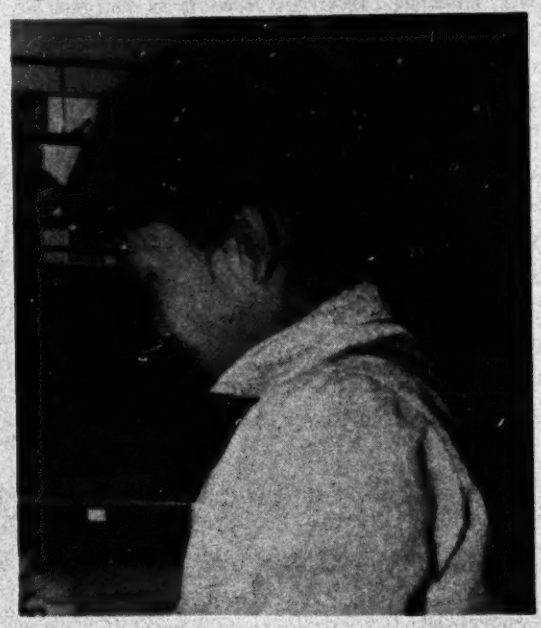
What are some of the differences' to which teachers are altered?

Buenabenta includes in his report a table summarizing problems which may result from conflicts in cultural values which were studied by Dr. Miles V. Zintz, professor of education at the University of New Mexico, and published in his books, "The Indian Research Study" and "Education Across Cultures."

Dr. Zintz considers probable difficulties in discipline, motivation and school achievement within five areas—attitude toward nature, time orientation, level of aspiration, attitude toward work and language difficulties. In comparing cultural values in these areas of the Anglo, Indian and Spanish-American, he uses values of the middle-class "average American" student as the norm.

Attitudes Differ

For instance, Dr. Zintz defines the Anglo attitude toward nature as "mastery over nature;" the Indian attitude as "harmony with nature." Resentment of the Anglo attitude may lead an Indian child to resist parts of the curriculum, Dr. Zintz contends, and this, in turn, might be interpreted as a lack of motivation. Another example: the Anglo culture places an emphasis on success while Spanish-American culture accepts a "be satisfied with the present" attitude. Dr. Zintz sees a possible disciplinary problem with Spanish-American children whose lack of goals could create disinterest which is manifested in attendance irregularities. Dr. Zintz, too, places great emphasis on language difficulties as a source of problems in discipline, motivation and school achievement.



Because her culture tells her that work to satisfy present needs is enough, school achievement may suffer when she finds a conflict in ideals with a curriculum unrealistic to her but normal to a child of middle-class background who is taught that success will be achieved by hard work.

There is no doubt that the orientation program at the Santo Domingo school has been successful.

"Everything was so new and different for me," said Mrs. Johnnie McDonald, a first-year sixth grade teacher from Louisiana. "If it hadn't been for the orientation sessions, I wouldn't still be here."

What stands out in the minds of teachers from the cultural study they do is the correction of misconceptions which they themselves once had regarding the culturally-different or which they often have heard from others.

"You hear that because these children are quiet they aren't as bright as other kids . . ." said Mrs. Yvonne O'Malley, a fourth grade teacher who taught previously in California, "that Indians are dumb and backwards and poverty-stricken. This is just not true."

Brothers III

Roybal, a former Christian brother who during 40 years of teaching has dealt with children of French, Mexican, Spanish-American and Anglo descent said, "These kids get along well . . . there is seldom any griping . . . they take care of each other . . . they address each other as brothers . . . there is a strong competitiveness among them."

The newest teacher at the school is Miss Yvonne Vigil, fresh out of the University of Albuquerque, who in her first four weeks of classroom work participated in three orientation meetings.

"The sessions are invaluable," she said. "We learn what are really the big problems for these children and what aren't as regards their customs and taboos. A strong reward system is important here. Denying the children outdoor time is probably the

(Continued on page 40)

SANTO DOMINGO . . .

(Continued from page 14)

best cure for lack of motivation. And a little praise is enough to give them some fast continued incentive."

From the experienced teacher, the observations are just as optimistic, the comments just as enthusiastic. Mrs. Rosemary Paez has been with the school since it was established. She teaches the second grade course of English as a second language which is based on the Miami Linguistics reading plan.

"A child here is just like any other child," said Mrs. Paez. "Each will size me up just as I size them up. But you do have to earn more of their confidence and trust than other children to be able to work effectively with them. And you certainly must show confidence in each one of them, too."

One of two teachers of Indian descent teaching at the school, Peter Paul Sandoval, has been there for four years. He admits it's a "tremendous help coming from their own kind. They are prone to believe me more than the others," but he has given no thought to the feasibility of having Indians taught by Indians only.

"It's a two-way profit-sharing thing," he said. "The children also learn from being exposed to teachers from a culture different than their own. After all, they undergo a "cultural shock," too."

The attitude of the teachers is perhaps the best measure of the success of the orientation program at the Santo Domingo Public School. As one teacher put it, "Often times, it's not so much teaching as it is understanding." ●